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Letter dated 12 November 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the message sent by H.E. Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, on the occasion of the debate on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could arrange for it to be circulated as a document of the Security Council under the agenda item entitled "Situation in Côte d'Ivoire".

(*Signed*) Philippe D. **Djancone-Bi**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter date 12 November 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department of United Nations and and Specialized Agencies Affairs

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
Union — Discipline — Work

Abidjan, 10 November 2003

Message from H.E. Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the Security Council on the occasion of the renewal of the mandate of MINUCI

Mr. President,

Members of the Security Council are meeting today to assess the situation in Côte d'Ivoire in accordance with resolution 1479 (2003) of 13 May 2003 establishing the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and to consider whether to renew its mandate.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Council for their continued interest in the situation in my country, and to express my gratitude and that of the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the means deployed by the international community as a whole, and by the Secretary-General in particular, to restore peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

I am pleased to inform you that in the interval since resolution 1479 (2003) was adopted significant progress has been made in implementing the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra II Agreements.

Without listing all the important measures the Government has taken to guarantee peace and ensure the security of people and property, I should like to point out that the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has begun and that the Ministers of Defence, Security and the Family, Children and Women have been appointed, thus completing, following intense negotiations, the Government of National Reconciliation. We should also mention that we have begun redeploying the administration to the western part of the country.

At this stage it would be appropriate to re-examine the very nature of MINUCI so as to provide it with the necessary means in terms of manpower, logistics and a broader mandate so that it can be deployed throughout the territory and be an instrument of the international community, capable of maintaining peace and security throughout the country.

Maintaining the current status of MINUCI has proved to have limitations for the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, for the following reasons:

1. Resolution 1479 (2003) states in paragraph 2 that MINUCI's mandate is to facilitate the implementation by the Ivorian parties of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, and including a military component on the basis of option (b) identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2003/374), complementing the operations of the

French forces and those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The mission has no direct mandate to intervene in order to maintain the peace; it complements the operations carried out by the French and ECOWAS forces which themselves are limited by their mandate. It is made up of 76 unarmed liaison officers, 42 of whom are in the field, and it makes sure that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General receives accurate information concerning the military and humanitarian situation so he can carry out his mission.

MINUCI has no soldiers, no weapons and its military component acts as liaison between the Forces Licorne, the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MICECI) and the Forces Nouvelles.

2. Maintenance of peace and security is the responsibility of the Forces Licorne and the MICECI (ECOFORCE) of ECOWAS.

MICECI has 1,383 soldiers and the French Licorne forces have 4,000 men. Whereas MICECI is desperately short of logistic means and personnel the Forces Licorne have no problems in terms of materiel but find it difficult to spread out without authorization from the Forces Nouvelles. France bears the financial burden of its forces alone.

The ECOWAS forces have insufficient means and the problem of financing that force is acute.

The Ghanaian contingent is financed by the United Kingdom, the Benin contingent by Belgium, the Senegalese, Togolese and Nigerian by France, and others such as the United States, Germany, the European Union provide material and financial support for that West African force; however, it is desperately short of means to spread out throughout the national territory.

The Commander of that force is in a difficult situation, for he has only 1,383 soldiers. Moreover, he is not in a position to plan its activities for his resources come through very slowly. Right now, he has enough for just two weeks of operations.

Maintaining the current status of MINUCI and the means available to MICECI will not be conducive to implementation of the peace agreement, inter alia national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, securing the border and monitoring national mineral and agricultural products which are currently being looted; these tasks must be given to an international force that is financed by the United Nations and that has a mandate to that effect.

The ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire is limited in what it can do by the logistic means available to it and it is dependent to a large extent on the Forces Licorne which lend it heavy equipment. How can it act as a deterrent when it does not have its own means?

For Côte d'Ivoire, the only desirable option is for MINUCI to be turned into a United Nations peacekeeping operation which would include MICECI and for the French forces to preserve their current status.

But in order for this MINUCI to be able to carry out its mission properly it would have to be a much larger force — at least 10,000 troops.

Should this idea meet with the approval of all the members of the Security Council, the United Nations would take over the role that up to now has been that of the Forces Licorne, and MICECI would be part of the new MINUCI, transformed into a peacekeeping operation and alone capable of meeting everyone's expectations.

That, Mr. President, is the position of Côte d'Ivoire concerning the renewal of the mandate of MINUCI. I am sure I can count on your usual understanding and support.

In any event, I believe the time has come to invite members of the Council to reflect with us on the need for an overall approach to issues relating to peace, which could be achieved by means of a subregional stabilization plan that West Africa could set up.

Such an initiative is dear to Côte d'Ivoire and to a number of Governments in our geographical area and it would be in line with preventive diplomacy efforts and should help put an end to the conflict-coup d'état spiral that is preventing the subregion from devoting its resources and energies to the only worthwhile struggle, namely, the struggle for development.

Accordingly, we hope that the international community, and the Security Council in particular will give us their support.

I thank you.